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Dundas (H) 1st Visct. Melville 12

Parliament Street, April 6, 1798.

My Lord,

IN conformity to the diſpoſitions of the Act juſt paſſed, intituled, an Act "To enable his Majeſty more effectually to provide for the defence and ſecurity "of the Realm; and for indemnifying Perſons who may ſuffer in their Property by ſuch Meaſures "as may be neceſſary for that purpoſe.' I feel myſelf called upon, in obedience to His Majeſty's Commands, to addreſs your Lordſhip upon ſeveral points connected with the Defence of the Country, and to which, from a conviction of their importance, I moſt anxiouſly requeſt your Lordſhip's particular attention.

Having lately had frequent occaſions to require your Lordſhip's aſſiſtance in the execution, of Plans and Arrangements, adopted and acted upon by His Majeſty's Government as conducive to the ſame object, it would have been a ſatisfaction to me, if I could have avoided giving you further trouble for the preſent: but further exertions being deemed neceſſary, I am convinced, I ſhould not do juſtice to your Lordſhip's ſentiments, and to the Zeal of every deſcription of Perſons acting under you, if I heſitated a moment to explain the full extent of thoſe exertions: and the ſuggeſtions which have occurred for carrying them into effect.

Whatever confidence I place in the actual Security of theſe Kingdoms, in conſequence of the decided ſuperiority of our Navy, and of the amount of the Land Forces already embodied, or now collecting for the protection of the Country againſt the menaced Invaſion of the Enemy; I ſhould not feel I diſcharged my Duty, if our Syſtem of Defence did not embrace ſuch further means of Security as appear to be evidently within our reach.

In the practical application of this principle, I am convinced, your Lordſhip, and generally every Perſon muſt concur in opinion with me, that it is of much importance to extend, as widely as poſſible, that feeling of Confidence which will naturally reſult from Men of every deſcription being placed in a ſituation to take, in their reſpective Stations, an active part in the Defence of their Country; eſpecially if this can be accompliſhed without any material interruption to the various habitual occupations in which they are ſeverally engaged.

In many great and populous Towns of the Kingdom, this principle has already been acted upon, in ſo far, as a variety of Volunteer Corps and Armed Aſſociations have been formed generally for the purpoſe of local Defence and Security. I ſhall therefore confine myſelf to ſuggeſt the propriety of encouragiug the formation of any further Corps on ſimilar Principles within any ſuch Towns in the County of Suffolk, It muſt however be conſidered as an eſſential condition in the Eſtabliſhment of any future Corps of this deſcription, that they ſhould conſiſt of none but known and reſpectable Houſholders, or of Perſons who can bring, at leaſt, two ſuch Houſholders to anſwer for their good behaviour. Corps of this deſcription, if formed in Sea Ports, would in

caſe of any Hoſtile Attempt being made, be neceſſary to ſtrengthen the Garriſons of ſuch Places, and in all Populous Towns engaged in purſuits of Manufacture or Trade, whether ſituated on the Coaſt or Inland, their preſence within ſuch Towns, might, in caſe of emergency, when the regular Forces might be wanted elſewhere, be very uſeful to relieve them in the preſervation of internal tranquillity and the maintenance of a proper Police. With a wiſh to give every poſſible encouragement to Perſons willing to come forward for theſe eſſential Objects, and from a conſideration of the great inconvenience and loſs to which ſuch Perſons, engaged as they are in extenſive Concerns of Buſineſs, might be expoſed, if they were liable to be called away from the neceſſary ſuperintendance of their reſpective avocations. His Majeſty has been pleaſed to authoriſe me to inform your Lordſhip, that any armed Aſſociation, either of Cavalry or Infantry, formed of the deſcription of Perſons above mentionad, and within ſuch Towns as I now advert to, will, if recommended by your Lordſhip, be accepted by His Majeſty, although the offer of their Services ſhould be limited reſpectively, to the Town in which they are to be raiſed, and within a few Miles thereof; that the Officers of the ſaid Corps will receive Commiſſions from the King, upon your Lordſhip's recommendation, and if required, Arms will be ſupplied by Government; but every other expence of Armed Aſſociations of this deſcription muſt be defrayed by themſelves.—It is however no leſs eſſential to the general ſecurity of the Kingdom, to intereſt and engage in its defence, the Huſbandman and Labourers, Inhabitants of the Country, who being more diſperſed and, from their condition of Life, leſs able to aſſociate together upon the Plans purſued in the Towns, appear to require that the exertions they are certainly willing to make, ſhould be duly directed by the interpoſition of your Lordſhip's advice and authority, in concert with the Gentlemen of Property and Influence in the County, and aided by the reſpectable Farmers with whom they are immediately connected. If the very valuable Claſſes of Men to which I now refer, are not appriſed of the Duties for which they would be wanted, and if ſome previous arrangements are not made and regulations Eſtabliſhed, with the reſpect to the diſtribution, application and diſcharge of thoſe Duties, in caſe of actual Invaſion, the approach of an Enemy would neceſſarily produce among them a general confuſion and alarm, highly prejudicial to their own Intereſt and to the general ſafety of the Country; whereas, if the modes in which their aſſiſtance may be made uſeful, can be explained to them at preſent, ſo that each Man may be inſtructed and (if neceſſary) trained beforehand in the exerciſe of the particular Service to be aſſigned to him in caſe of emergency, the reſult will be confidence and union among themſelves, and that Government will not only acquire a great acceſſion of ſtrength, but, what is perhaps more important, the means of appropriating with regularity and directing with vigor, that ſtrength againſt an invading Enemy.

The meaſures which I have reaſon to believe have already been taken in the County of Suffolk, for aſcertaining the number of Perſons between the ages of 15 and 60, not engaged in any Military Capacity, will, I believe, afford ſome facility to your Lordſhip in carrying ſo far into execution the proviſions of the Act now tranſmitted, which it his Majeſty's expreſs Com-

mands ſhould be punctually attended to (as far as they are applicable) in the County of Suffolk. I am aware of the difficulties which may occur in procuring theſe neceſſary details, but I am confident they may be overcome by your Lordſhip's zeal and perſeverance, aided, as I truſt you will be, by the cordial co-operation of every well diſpoſed Perſon, who, in his public capacity, or by his private influence, can afford you any aſſiſtance in this reſpect.

I encloſe to your Lordſhip herewith, a Form of a Schedule No. 1. in conformity to which, this return ſhould be taken in each Pariſh and Diviſion of the County, and agreeable to which, a general return of the Totals for the whole County is to be tranſmitted to me for his Majeſty's Information.

No. 2. is another Schedule, requiring information on other heads referred to in the Act above mentioned, and which is to be procured and tranſmitted in the ſame manner. One point which it would be very material not to neglect, is, to aſcertain the number of Boats, Barges and ſmall Craft on the Canals and Rivers of the Country. The uſe to be derived in certain caſes from this ſpecies of aſſiſtance to the movements of our own Forces, and the advantages it might afford to the Enemy if ſuffered to fall into their hands, are ſo obvious, that I need not preſs further upon your Lordſhip, the importance of obtaining reſpecting it, every information in your power. I have, however abſtained from including it in the Schedule, as it appears to me impoſſible in moſt caſes to conſider this deſcription of property as excluſively confined to any particular County, but at the ſame time, I have ſo far thought it right to call your Lordſhip's attention to the ſubject, in order, that as far as poſſible, it may be brought under the general arrangments of precautions neceſſary at the preſent moment.

The Schedule No. 3. is prepared with a view to aſcertain the various points under the reſpective heads therein ſtated, and to which it is of the utmoſt importance that returns ſhould be made with all poſſible expedition, and the Totals tranſmitted to Government in the ſame manner.

In aſcertaining the number of Perſons, Inhabitants of any of the principal Towns of the County of Suffolk who may be willing to ſerve in a Military Capacity, your Lordſhip will take care to ſtate, whether they come under the deſcription, and are willing to comply with the conditions ſpecified in a former part of this Letter. From what I have already ſtated, and by a reference to the Schedule, No. 3. your Lordſhip will perceive, that in the Country, the Aſſociations, if armed, will not be formed upon the ſame Principles as in the Towns, and that it is intended to encourage other Aſſociations equally neceſſary in caſe of Invaſion, and which can be formed by Inhabitants of the Country only. Each of theſe points require ſome ſeperate explanation.

Firſt. It is intended, that no Volunteer ſhould be admitted into the armed Aſſociations to be found in the Country, whoſe habitual occupation and place of reſidence is not within the Diviſion of the County to which the Aſſociation may extend; that thoſe who may prefer Ser-

vice on Horſeback, ſhall (if the Troops of Yeomanry Cavalry already raiſed within the County ſhould not be complete, or ſhould their preſent Eſtabliſhment admit, without inconvernience of an augmentation) be received into the neareſt Troop of the ſame, in all caſes where this arrangement, may ſuit local purpoſes, and be found acceptable to the ſaid Troop, and to the Parties: and in other caſes they will be formed into ſeperate and independant Troops, of not leſs than 40, nor more than 80 Men each, to be Commanded by ſuch Officers as may be recommended by your Lordſhip, in a ſimilar proportion to the Yeomanry Cavalry, and they will be entitled to the ſame allowances and aſſiſtance from Government, to procure Clothing and Appointments, namely, at the rate of three Pounds for each Perſon ſerving in the ſaid Corps, per Annum, for three Years, ſubject to the ſame regulations and to be iſſued in the ſame manner as to the Yeomanry already eſtablſhied as ſpecified in the Letter from the Secretary at War to your Lordſhip of this Day's date.

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All new Troops formed upon this principle, to engage to be trained, at leaſt, once in a Week, and for not leſs than three hours at a time; and in caſe of actual Invaſion, or the actual appearance of an Enemy upon the Coaſt, to ſerve within the limits of the Military Diſtrict to which they belong.—With reſpect to armed Aſſociations of Infantry, it is propoſed, that they ſhould be formed into independant Companies of not leſs than 60, nor more than 120 Men in each Company, to be armed in the ſame manner as the Volunteer Corps in the Towns, or ſhould it be found impoſſible from their number, to furniſh them all with Muſquets in the firſt inſtance, that a certain proportion ſhould be provided with Pikes.—That they ſhould be ſupplied with an Uniform Clothing, or a fair allowance to provide themſelves with the ſame at the public expence; that each Company ſhould be commanded by a Captain to be recommended by your Lordſhip, having a Lieutenant, an Enſign, and a proper number of Non-commiſſioned Officers in proportion to the ſtrength of the Company under him; but your Lordſhip is not to recommend any Perſon to ſuch Command who has not a reſidence and an Income in Land to the amount of 50l. within the County of Suffolk, or who does not rent Land within the ſame to the amount of 100l. per Annum, and if poſſible within the Diviſion thereof in which the ſaid Company may be raiſed, except the Sons of Perſons ſo qualified, or Perſons having previouſly held ſome Military Commiſſion which in your Lordſhip's judgment might render them eligible for ſuch a ſituation, although they might not hold Land either in poſſeſſion or occupancy to the amount above mentioned. Should your Lordſhip be acquainted with any Perſon accuſtomed to Military Service (whether on the half-pay Liſt of the Army or not) who may be diſpoſed to accept either of the Subaltern Commiſſions, ſuch a Perſon will be preferred for the ſame, if approved of and recommended by your Lordſhip, and in caſe no proper Perſon of this deſcription ſhould be known to your Lordſhip, Government will endeavour, as far as poſſible, to provide one, together with one Non-commiſſioned Officer for each Company, to train the Men, and teach them the uſe of Arms.—This Non-commiſſioned Officer would receive conſtant Pay from Government.—The Subaltern Officer, if ſelected from the half-pay Liſt, will be allowed the full pay of his Rank, and in caſe he has

heretofore been engaged in any Military Line which does not entitle him to half-pay, he will, if approved of, be entitled to an allowance equivalent to the half-pay of whatever Commiſſion he may hold in the Company, ſo long as he ſhall continue to hold ſuch Commiſſion.

Each Company of Infantry to engage to be trained at leaſt once a Week, and for not leſs than ſix Hours at a time, and in caſe of Invaſion, to ſerve within the limits of the Military Diſtrict to which ſuch Company may belong.

Conſidering the great importance of encouraging Aſſociations of this deſcription among the Inhabitants of the Country, the inconvenience to which they may be expoſed from their ſcattered Situation in aſſembling to be muſtered and trained, and the difference between their Situation in Life and the circumſtances of the Perſons compoſing Volunteer Corps in Towns, His Majeſty is graciouſly pleaſed to authoriſe me to inform your Lordſhip, that every Man of the former will be entitled (ſhould he think proper to claim it) to an allowance of one Shilling per week to be paid by Government to ſuch as may appear upon the return, ſigned by the Commanding Officer, to have attended at the muſter and training above mentioned.---Should the Companies formed in any particular Diviſion of the County be numerous, and different Days of exerciſe be fixed upon by the ſaid Companies reſpectively, a ſmaller number of Arms in the firſt inſtance, and of Non-Commiſſioned Officers to train them, may be ſufficient. I mention this circumſtance with a view to their mutual accommodation in theſe points in caſe the full number of either cannot be ſupplied immediately, but certainly with reſpect to Arms, no exertion will be ſpared to provide ſuch a Depot at a ſafe place within the County, as may be ſufficient in caſe of emergency to ſupply all demands.

Having now explained to your Lordſhip, as far as appears neceſſary for the preſent, the means by which it appears deſirable that the Voluntary exertions of Individuals diſpoſed to Act in a Military Capacity within the County of Suffolk, ſhould be encouraged and regulated, I ſhall proceed to call your Lordſhip's attention to other ſuggeſtions and arrangements coming under the remaining heads of the Schedule and equally eſſential for the Defence and Security of the Country in caſe of Invaſion.

With a view to ſuch an emergency, no previous arrangement that can improve our chance of ſpeedy and deciſive ſucceſs, or tend to embarraſs the operations and defeat the views of the Enemy ſhould be neglected. For this purpoſe it is neceſſary, not only to be prepared with an Armed Force adequate to meet and repel their aggreſſion in the Field; but to be ready, on the firſt alarm of Invaſion, effectually to deprive them of every means of ſupply they might expect, and to impede and harraſs them in every movement they might attempt in this Country; and both theſe objects muſt be combined with the means of furniſhing our own Forces with every requiſite, and of faciliating their movements and operations by every aſſiſtance the Country can afford.— To provide for theſe joint objects, branching out into a variety of details unneceſſary to be mentioned at preſent, it is eſſential to aſcertain what number of Men in the County of Suffolk are willing to act as Pioneers and Labourers in caſe of Invaſion, or of very imminent danger thereof,

upon the Requiſition of the Commander in Chief in the Diſtrict, and with what Implements they are provided for this ſpecies of Service. The information required under this head will be comprehended in the columns of the Schedule, No. 3. The principal duties of theſe Pioneers and Labourers would be, to deſtroy and break up ſuch Roads, Bridges, or other means of communication as are likely to be uſeful to the Enemy, to cut down and clear away any Obſtacles (Woods, Fences or otherwiſe) to the movements of our own Troops, and, in general, to perform whatever Services of Labour are judged requiſite by the Commander in Chief, or any competent Perſon acting under his authority.—Under the 17th. and 18th, Columns will be ranged, all Perſons who may engage to aſſiſt in removing the Live and Dead Stock with a view to prevent their falling into the hands of the Enemy, and of enſuring a regular ſupply to our own Forces.

The powers reſted in the proper Officers attached to the Army, and to which I ſhall hereafter have occaſion to refer, will, I truſt, be found fully adequate to this laſt purpoſe, and the precautions it is His Majeſty's pleaſure ſhould forthwith be taken, are principally material with a view to the former, and if properly executed (ſhouldthe neceſſity ariſe) will befound equally eſſential to the Security of the County and to the Intereſt of the Individuals to whom they apply.—Without entering into further details in this Diſpatch, your Lordſhip, I am convinced, muſt be impreſſed with the importance of procuring the information required under theſe heads; your Lordſhip however may acquire ſome knowledge of the uſe that may be derived from it, and of the practical application of the regulations which it is deſirable to eſtabliſh on all theſe laſt mentioned points, and alſo with reſpect to Bakers and Guides, by peruſing the encloſed papers, which have been prepared for the information and guidance of the maratime Counties in the execution of ſuch parts of the late Act as have reference to the ſeveral ſubjects to which they relate.

The ſubſequent Columns of the Schedule are ſo immediately connected with this laſt ſubject, that they can require no particular explanation. I ſhall ſimply obſerve, that it will be more ſatisfactory that every Pariſh ſhould make a return of what, according to the judgment of the moſt competent Perſons therein, may be reckoned the fair average or uſual proportion of Live or Dead Stock of the ſaid Pariſh, than a minute ſpecification of what there may happen to be at the moment ſuch return is called for.

Your Lordſhip's local knowledge and experience of the eſtabliſhed modes of proceeding in the details of whatever arrangments are to be executed under the authority of the Lord Lieutenant in the County of Suffolk, muſt render it ſuperfluous for me to offer any ſuggeſtions on the ſteps to be taken for carrying into effect the King's Commands as ſtated in this Letter. The manner in which the County is now formed into Diviſions and Sub-diviſions of different deſcriptions and extent, and the Perſon or Perſons in each, whoſe duty it now is to attend to other points of public Intereſt, will, I truſt, be found ſufficient for every purpoſe of theſe Inſtructions ; at the ſame time, I am aware that ſome allowances muſt be made, in the application of a plan ſo general and extenſive, for unforeſeen Contingencies, and in theſe caſes, His Majeſty, truſting to your Lordſhip and your Deputy Lieutenants not to loſe ſight of the principles of the meaſure, is graci-

only pleaſed to leave to your joint diſcretion to act according to circumſtances, and I beg leave to aſſure your Lordſhip, that I ſhall be glad to hear from your Lordſhip, either officially or privately, reſpecting any modifications that may ſuggeſt themſelves to you, or the Gentlemen with whom you may conſult; and that I ſhall not fail to give them the moſt attentive and candid conſideration; and ſhould they appear expedient, and of a nature to require the further interpoſition of Parliament during the preſent Seſſion, a power, as your Lordſhip will perceive, is reſerved under the laſt Act for this purpoſe.

It would now remain for me before I conclude this Letter, to call your Lordſhips atention to the application of the ſeveral preparatory arrangements already adverted to in Caſe of the actual appearance of an Enemy, or of their having landed on the Coaſt; and with a view to that application, a variety of points remain to be determined, ſuch as ſettling the Places of Depot to to which the live and dead Stock are to be removed, the manner in which they are to be taken of at ſuch Depots, the Routs which they are to take, and thoſe which they are to avoid, in order not to interfere with the movements of the Military; the allotments of Yeomanry or other Eſcorts for their protection, or for enforcing the regulations eſtabliſhed reſpecting them; the neceſſary arrangments for removing infirm Perſons, Women and Children, and next to them, ſuch articles of Property as are moſt valuable: the precautions to be taken for deſtroying the remainder, and for obtaining, by previous Eſtimates, agreeable to the Proviſions of the Act, ſome grounds by which the amount of Compenſation to be made to Owners of Property ſo deſtroyed may be aſcerained: the ſeperate place of Rendezvous to which every deſcription of Perſons, whether connected with the armed Force or otherwiſe, ſhould repair on the Signals of alarm being made, the arrangment of thoſe Signals and of every other particular which may tend to inſure promptitude and regularity in the execution of whatever movements and operations it might then be neceſſary to undertake.

The mode of ſupplying our own Army in ſuch an emergency, embraces alſo a variety of details and arrangments which cannot be too ſoon determined upon and put in train of execution. The only effectual means of bringing all theſe laſt points under diſcuſſion is, that your Lordſhip ſhould call, as ſoon as poſſible, a General Meeting of the Deputy Lieutenants and Magiſtrates of the County of Suffolk, at which, General Sir William Howe, commanding His Majeſty's Forces in the Eaſtern Diſtrict, or ſome competent Officer, fully authoriſed, will be directed to attend, and to ſubmit and explain to the Meeting, the Plans and local Arrangments prepared and determined upon by him, in concert with His Royal Highness, the Commander in Chief, and His Majeſty's Miniſters, upon each of the heads; in which the aſſiſtance of the Civil Power, acting in concert with him, will be neceſſary for carrying them into execution. In like manner, the Commiſſary General of the Forces, or a proper Commiſſary of Stores and Proviſions, acting under his direction and duly authoriſed, will be directed to attend, and to lay before the Meeting the Plan approved by His Majeſty's Treaſury for the ſupply of the Army, and to point out and explain the mode in which the concurrence and aſſiſtance of the ſaid Meeting will be requiſite for carrying them into Execution, your Lordſhip will allow me to ſuggeſt the expediency of your con-

ſulting with the General, to fix the day of calling ſuch Meeting, in order to enſure the attendance above-mentioned, without too much interfering with other eſſential Duties that may require to be executed in the Diſtrict.

Should the Enemy in the proſecution of their avowed deſigns againſt this Country, ſucceed in eſcaping the vigilance of our ſuperior Navy, and the final iſſue of this great Conteſt remain ultimately to be decided by the Valour and Spirit of our Land Forces, that iſſue will very much depend on the precautions which I have now ſtated to your Lordſhip, being executed with punctuality and in the ſtricteſt concert with the Officers commanding His Majeſty's Forces in the ſeveral Military Diſtricts to which thoſe Counties belong.—It is to this iſſue as a poſſible event with all the reſponſibility and all the Conſequences it involves, that His Majeſty's confidential Servants were bound to look when they ſubmitted to his Majeſty the Plans I have now ſtated.—The ſame proſpect, the ſame conſiderations, they truſt will rouſe the Energy and animate the Exertions of every Man to whom any ſhare of their execution is now committed under His Majeſty's expreſs Commands.

The great and fundamental advantage of the previous Arrangements it is his Majeſty's pleaſure ſhould be forthwith executed is, that if properly attended to, they will aſſign to every Man the duty he ſhould fulfil, and the Poſt to which he ſhould repair in the hour of Emergency, guarding him and the Country, on the one hand againſt Confuſion and Panic, and on the other againſt the diſaſters incident to Temerity and ill concerted Operations. In preparing for that Emergency, I cannot too ſtrongly recommend to every deſcription of Perſons, to lay aſide all untimely and miſplaced jealouſy reſpecting the Military Power, with which every Arrangement muſt be concerted —Your Lordſhip in particular and all Perſons acting immediately under you, cannot be too ſtrongly impreſſed with the neceſſity of an unreſerved and habitual communication with thoſe to whom the direction of that Power is entruſted in the Eaſtern Diſtrict, and I can aſſure your Lordſhip that, on their part they have His Majeſty's moſt poſitive orders to be equally unreſerved and frequent in their communications with your Lordſhip and your Deputy Lieutenants, and in all doubtful occurrences connected with the Civil Power, where time will admit of it, to recur to your or their advice, and to neglect no means of cultivating and maintaining with you a perfect harmony, concert and good underſtanding.—Should the Emergency actually exiſt, from that moment of courſe every deſcription of armed Force, and every Aſſociation formed with a view to annoy or impede the Enemy, or to ſupport and aſſiſt our own Forces, would come under the immediate orders of the Military Commander, and, as far as conſiſtent with their conditions of Service, taking the ſtation, aſſigned to each reſpectively, in his general arrangment for the defence of his Diſtrict, continue to ſerve in it; under ſuch orders as may be iſſued by thoſe, whom in ſuch a moment, it will be their firſt duty and their beſt Intereſt to obey,

I have the honor to be 18 JA 53

My Lord,

Your Lordſhip's moſt obedient humble Servant,

Henry Dundas.